UNITED
NATIONS

A

General Assembly

Distr.
GENERAL

A/51/525
18 October 1996
ENGLISH
ORIGINAL: ARABIC

Fifty-first session
Agenda item 9

GENERAL DEBATE

Letter dated 4 October 1996 from the Permanent Representative of Iraq to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I should like to refer to the matter of the unfair treatment by the secretariat of the General Assembly of the United Nations of Iraq's requests concerning the fixing of a date for its address to the General Assembly.

It is well known that the secretariat of the General Assembly requests each State Member of the United Nations to submit three choices of a date for its address during the period of the general debate of the General Assembly and that those choices are divided among the three weeks of the general debate. The secretariat of the General Assembly approves one of the three choices in the light of various criteria, inter alia, the principle of rotation so as to guarantee the equal rights of States.

It is extremely regrettable that, since 1990, the General Assembly has ignored our requests to speak during the first week of the general debate, which is supposed to accommodate one third of the Member States. The dates for our addresses were fixed for the second or third weeks, sometimes unsuitably so on dates which we had never requested.

In view of this repeated discriminatory practice, which, occurring for the sixth successive year, means that the secretariat of the General Assembly now typically deals with Iraq's requests in such a manner, we should like to draw attention to the unfairness of this treatment, particularly since, in performing their work, Secretariat bodies are required to apply impartially the principle of the equal rights and prerogatives of States as guaranteed under the Charter.

I should be grateful if you would have this letter circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 9.

Accept, Sir, the assurances of my highest consideration.

(Signed) Nizar HAMDOON
Permanent Representative
Ambassador

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General Assembly

Distr.
GENERAL

A/51/526
18 October 1996
ENGLISH
ORIGINAL: CHINESE AND ENGLISH

Fifty-first session
Agenda item 54

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RESOLUTIONS OF THE UNITED NATIONS

Letter dated 16 October 1996 from the Permanent Representative of China to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Upon instructions from my Government, I wish to solemnly state the following:

1. At the just-concluded general debate of the fifty-first session of the General Assembly, representatives of a very small number of countries, in disregard of the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, the basic norms of international law and General Assembly resolution 2758 (XXVI) of 25 October 1971, openly brought up the question of the so-called Taiwan's "representation" at the United Nations and advocated "two Chinas", "one China, one Taiwan" and "one country, two seats" in their statements. The Chinese Government and people express their utmost indignation at and strong opposition to this move which not only tramples on the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and General assembly resolution 2758 (XXVI), but also constitutes a serious encroachment upon China's sovereignty and territorial integrity and a gross interference in its internal affairs.

2. Taiwan has been an inalienable part of the Chinese territory since ancient times. Both the 1943 Cairo Declaration and the 1945 Potsdam Proclamation clearly declared the return of Taiwan to China from the colonial rule of Japan after the Second World War, thus affirming once again China's sovereignty over Taiwan. The 159 countries that have established diplomatic relations with China so far all recognize that there is but one China in the world and that Taiwan is an inalienable part of China.

Twenty-five years ago, the General Assembly, at its twenty-sixth session, adopted by an overwhelming majority resolution 2758 (XXVI) on the question of China's representation, which clearly and unequivocally recognizes "that the representatives of the Government of the People's Republic of China are the only

lawful representatives of China to the United Nations and that the People's Republic of China is one of the five permanent representatives of the Security Council". Pursuant to that resolution, all the lawful rights of the People's Republic of China in the United Nations and all its agencies were restored to it. Resolution 2758 (XXVI) has accurately reflected the political situation in China since 1949, thus settling once and for all and in a just manner the question of China's representation at the United Nations politically, legally and procedurally, and at the same time rendering invalid the proposal on the so-called "dual representation" sponsored at that time by a very small number of countries.

3. The United Nations is an intergovernmental international organization. Article 4 of the Charter provides in explicit terms that only sovereign States are entitled to the membership of the United Nations. The "principle of universality" is based on sovereign States. Taiwan, which has never been a sovereign State, but rather a province of China, has no qualifications whatsoever to join the United Nations. Therefore, the "principle of universality" is not applicable to it at all.

The question of Taiwan is also different in nature from the questions of Germany and Korea, which were brought about by international agreements at the end of the Second World War. It is therefore untenable and absurd to argue for Taiwan's "membership in the United Nations" based on the model of "parallel representation" of East and West Germany and that of North and South Korea.

4. In accordance with the principle of international law, the so-called "Government of the Republic of China" had ceased to exist upon the founding of the People's Republic of China. Elections or any other activities carried out in the Province of Taiwan, in whatever name, are activities at the local level and can therefore never be used as the basis to "split the country and rule under separate regimes". Whatever change that is made to the way in which leaders of Taiwan are produced cannot change the fact that Taiwan is a part of China and that Taiwan's leaders are leaders of a region of China. It is futile for any country or individual to legalize the secessionist activities by the Taiwan authorities on the ground that the way in which Taiwan's leaders are produced has changed. This move is also bound to meet with strong opposition from the Chinese Government and the entire Chinese people.

The attempts by the Taiwan authorities to "join the United Nations" and "expand living space in the world", though under new guises, are in the final analysis aimed at splitting China, creating "two Chinas", "one China, one Taiwan" and "Taiwan independence". Should the Taiwan authorities, bent on having their own way, continue to carry out activities aimed at splitting China, there are bound to be tensions in the Taiwan Straits, posing a threat to peace, stability and development in the Asia-Pacific region and the world as a whole. Support by any country and individual for the secessionist activities by the Taiwan authorities constitutes an obstacle to China's peaceful reunification and is therefore bound to meet with strong opposition from the Chinese Government and people and the vast numbers of justice-upholding and peace-loving Members of the United Nations.

5. In July this year, a few members of the European Parliament brought up by playing tricks a resolution on the so-called "Taiwan's role in international organizations", which openly advocates Taiwan's participation in some international organizations with a view to bringing Taiwan back to the United Nations. This is an attempt to deliberately undermine the friendly relations between China and Europe, in disregard of the basic norms governing international relations and in violation of the principles on the establishment of diplomatic relations between European countries and China. Such a perverse act which goes against the historical trend and general desire of the European people has not only met with strong opposition from the European people who support Sino-European friendship, but also been held in contempt by the vast numbers of justice-upholding countries and people. It is therefore futile and doomed to failure for a very small number of countries to invoke this resolution in their statements as the basis for their support for the secessionist activities by the Taiwan authorities.

6. It is the lofty mission and common aspiration of the entire Chinese people including the Taiwan compatriots as well as an irresistible historical trend to end the state of separation between the two sides of the Taiwan Straits and accomplish the grand cause of national reunification of China. The Taiwan authorities must desist from secessionist activities aimed at creating "two Chinas", "one China, one Taiwan" and "return to the United Nations" in the world and take the "one China" principled position not only in words but also in deeds. Only in this way can dialogue between the two sides of the Straits be resumed and relations between the two sides develop normally.

The Chinese Government and people have won support from an overwhelming majority of countries in their just cause of safeguarding sovereignty and territorial integrity. The flat refusal by the General Committees of the successive sessions of the General Assembly since the forty-eighth session to include the question of the so-called "Taiwan's representation" in the agenda of the General Assembly has fully reflected the firm stand of an overwhelming majority of Members of the United Nations in safeguarding the authority of the Charter and General Assembly resolution 2758 (XXVI) and proved that the proposal on the so-called "Taiwan's representation" put forward by a very small number of countries has no support at all. We wish to advise those countries not to be hoodwinked by the attempt of the Taiwan authorities, to strictly observe the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, the basic norms of international law as well as resolution 2758 (XXVI) and to conform to the historical trend by stopping interfering in China's internal affairs and repeating the same mistake. Otherwise, they will find them in an awkward position in the international community while enjoying no benefit whatsoever themselves.

I have the honour to request Your Excellency to have the text of the present letter circulated as an official document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 54.

(Signed) QIN Huasun
Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary
and Permanent Representative of the People's
Republic of China to the United Nations

UNITED NATIONS **A S**

General Assembly
Security Council

Distr.
GENERAL

A/51/527
S/1996/863
18 October 1996

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

GENERAL ASSEMBLY
Fifty-first session
Agenda item 39
THE SITUATION IN AFGHANISTAN AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR INTERNATIONAL PEACE AND SECURITY

SECURITY COUNCIL
Fifty-first year

Identical letters dated 18 October 1996 from the Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs of Afghanistan addressed to the Secretary-General and to the President of the Security Council

Upon instructions from the authorities of the Islamic State of Afghanistan, I have the honour to bring the following to your attention and through you to the Security Council for appropriate consideration and action.

As submitted to the Security Council, in my statement of 16 October 1996, the forces of the Islamic State have recently been able to capture armed Pakistani militia and military personnel during the recent events which culminated in the military occupation of Kabul by Pakistani mercenaries, known as Taliban. The following captured individuals were fighting alongside the Taliban against the forces of the Islamic State:

1. Mohammad Jawaid, son of Mohammad Israr, 25 years old, from Multan, Pakistan.

2. Khalid, son of Nasrullah, 23 years old, from Karachi.

3. Abdul Rahman, son of Shamsuddin, 23 years old, from Kashmir.

4. Obaidullah Shaheen, son of Allah Dena, 26 years old, from Multan, Pakistan.

5. Karimullah, son of Mohammad Rafique, 29 years old, from Punjab, Pakistan.

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6. Obaidullah, son of Mohammad Zahir, 22 years old, from Panjab, Pakistan.

7. Mohammad Omar Ahmad, son of Ahmad, 32 years old, from Karachi.

8. Hassan, son of Abdullah, 30 years old, from Punjab, Pakistan.

9. Mohammad Farooq, son of Gulab Khan, 32 years old, from Panjab, Pakistan.

10. Mohammad Ali, son of Manzoor Hassan, 22 years old, from Panjab, Pakistan.

11. Ghulam Rassod, son of Emam Bakhsh, 28 years old, from Panjab, Pakistan.

12. Abdul Haq, son of Zerbullah, 24 years old, from Sindh, Pakistan.

13. Abdul Karim, son of Mir Ahmad, 23 years old, from Sindh, Pakistan.

14. Kalimullah, son of Mohammad Rafiq, 28 years old, from Panjab, Pakistan.

15. Mohammad Ebrahim, son of Emdadullah, 22 years old, from Panjab, Pakistan.

16. Mudeer Hemat, son of Barakat Ali, 31 years old, from Panjab, Pakistan.

17. Mohammad Dur, son of Mohammad, 26 years old, from Sindh, Pakistan.

18. Mohammad Zulfiqar, son of Qader Baksh, 25 years old, from Sindh, Pakistan.

19. Amir Shah, son of Rahmat Shah, 27 years old, from Wazirustan, Pakistan.

20. Abdullah, son of Mohammad Zahir, 29 years old, from Panjab, Pakistan.

21. Sayed Mubarak Alishah, son of Saydshah, 30 years old, from Panjab, Pakistan.

22. Mohammad Amman, son of Mohammad Sharif, 25 years old, from Panjab, Pakistan.

23. Tajuddin, son of Haafiz, 25 years old, from Panjab, Pakistan.

24. Ghulam Yasseen, son of Ghulam Rassool, 30 years old, from Panjab, Pakistan.

25. Hamidullah, son of Muzdoor, 33 years old, from Kashmir.

26. Nasruddin, son of Abdul Wahed, 30 years old, from Kashmir.

27. Dadullah, son of Haji Shahbaz, 29 years old, from Baluchistan, Pakistan.

28. Mohmoud Khan, son of Maoud Khan, 31 years old, from Baluchistan, Pakistan.

The above-mentioned individuals are currently being held under the custody of the authority of the Islamic State.

As proposed yesterday, the Islamic State of Afghanistan earnestly hopes that the Council will decide to dispatch a United Nations fact-finding mission to Afghanistan to interview the captured Pakistani military officials and militias and evaluate other evidence of intervention, including the recent use by the Taliban of some type of chemical or internationally banned weapons against the forces of the Islamic State of Afghanistan.

I request that the present letter be distributed as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 39, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Abdul Rahim GHAFOORZAI
Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs
Islamic State of Afghanistan

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General Assembly

Distr.
GENERAL

A/51/528
18 October 1996

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

Fifty-first session
Agenda item 21 (b)

STRENGTHENING OF THE COORDINATION OF HUMANITARIAN AND DISASTER RELIEF ASSISTANCE OF THE UNITED NATIONS, INCLUDING SPECIAL ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE: SPECIAL ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE TO INDIVIDUAL COUNTRIES OR REGIONS

Special assistance to front-line States and other neighbouring States

Report of the Secretary-General

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. In its resolution 49/21 M of 20 December 1994, entitled "Special assistance to front-line States and other neighbouring States", the General Assembly, inter alia, appealed to the international community to continue to extend assistance to the front-line States and other neighbouring States of southern Africa to enable them to overcome the negative consequences of past acts of destabilization in the region; requested the Secretary-General and organizations and bodies of the United Nations system to respond to such requests for assistance as may be made by individual States or the appropriate regional organizations, and urged all States and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations to respond favourably to such requests; and, requested the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its fifty-first session on the progress made in the implementation of the resolution. The present report is submitted in response to that request. It covers activities undertaken by Member States and organizations of the United Nations system based on the salient parts of the replies received by the Secretariat.

II. ACTION TAKEN TO ASSIST FRONT-LINE STATES AND OTHER NEIGHBOURING STATES

A. Replies received from Member States

1. China

2. The People's Republic of China provided disaster relief assistance to the front-line States and other neighbouring States since 1995: Lesotho, general goods valued at Y 800,000 and US$ 100,000 in cash for the purchase of grain; Mozambique, general goods valued at Y 5 million; Botswana, general goods valued at Y 2 million; Malawi, US$ 400,000 in cash from China Red Cross Society; Zimbabwe, general goods valued at Y 2 million; Zambia, US$ 2 million in cash for the purchase of grain and general goods valued at Y 1 million; and Angola, general goods valued at Y 5.3 million.

3. In 1994, the Chinese Government also provided humanitarian assistance to the following countries: Lesotho, general goods valued at Y 1 million; Tanzania, 200 tons of rice and a batch of other general goods; Malawi, US$ 50,000 in cash; Zimbabwe, general goods valued at Y 1 million; and Angola, general goods valued at Y 1 million.

2. Germany

4. Nutrition programmes in southern Africa were supported by funds in the amount of DM 79.1 million. Pledges towards Southern African Development Community (SADC) projects amounted to DM 30 million and bilateral development assistance rendered to SADC countries added up to DM 751.4 million.

5. The German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development financed the following SADC projects: Promotion of the Research and Training

Centre for Sorghum and Millet (DM 1.5 million); promotion of groundnut production in SADC countries (DM 3 million); support for the Regional Railway Workers' Training Programme (DM 5 million); adviser to the SADC secretariat (DM 2.5 million); human resource development in the SADC Region/public sector administration and development (DM 2 million); postgraduate training in the agricultural sector of the SADC Region/SACCAR (DM 6 million); and, Southern African Wildlife College (DM 10 million).

6. The German bilateral assistance to SADC countries in 1994-1995 was as follows: Angola, DM 7 million; Botswana, DM 8 million; Lesotho, DM 15 million; Malawi, DM 172.1 million; Mauritius, DM 4.5 million; Mozambique, DM 111.8 million; Namibia, DM 92 million; Swaziland, DM 3.2 million; United Republic of Tanzania, DM 126 million; Zambia, DM 136 million; and, Zimbabwe, DM 75.6 million.

3. Kuwait

7. The following is a summary account of the assistance provided by Kuwait to the States in question: Lesotho, total tied loans, 6,897,180 Kuwaiti dinars; Malawi, total technical assistance, 250,000 Kuwaiti dinars; Mozambique, total tied and technical loans, 15,350,000 Kuwaiti dinars and 426,068 Kuwaiti dinars, respectively; Angola, total and technical tied loans, 5,200,000 Kuwaiti dinars and 570,000 Kuwaiti dinars, respectively. Unpaid interest due on loans in the amount of 38,183,680 Kuwaiti dinars previously made available by Kuwait to Angola has been forgiven.

4. New Zealand

8. The primary focus of New Zealand Official Development Assistance is upon its immediate neighbours in the South Pacific. However, it is conscious of the needs of the former front-line States and has recently increased its aid allocation for Africa by 23 per cent to NZ$ 3 million for the 1996-1997 financial year. The former front-line States are among the principal recipients of this assistance. In addition to this, within the last 12 months, New Zealand has provided NZ$ 200,000 to relieve drought in Zimbabwe, NZ$ 250,000 for school reconstruction and agricultural rehabilitation in Mozambique and NZ$ 200,000 for seeds and tools in Angola from its Emergency and Disaster Relief allocation. The New Zealand Army has assisted with mine clearance in Angola and Mozambique. New Zealand's contributions to multilateral organizations active in the former front-line States have increased by 25 per cent in the last two years.

B. Replies received from organizations of the United Nations system

1. United Nations Conference on Trade and Development

9. During the period under review, a technical assistance project for the Government of Mozambique was completed within the framework of the World Bank project "Roads and Coastal Shipping" (ROCS). The general objective of the

project, the Intermodal Transport and Customs Facilitation Programme, was to promote sustainable growth of Mozambican foreign trade by correcting the inefficiencies in the transport and trade system.

10. Based on earlier projects and with the financial support of the European Commission, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development's (UNCTAD) Training Development in the Field of Maritime Transport (TRAINMAR) programme has assisted Angola and Mozambique during the period under review to develop their capacity for training and human resource development in the area of maritime transport. In a two-year project spanning 1995-1996, full-time advisers have been based in the two countries and training centres with competent staff have been established with training programmes oriented to the needs of port managers and officials. Exchange programmes have been conducted between the two countries and 448 persons have been trained through the delivery of 30 courses conducted mainly by local personnel. The UNCTAD secretariat also led a team to study the privatization of the National Shipping Agency Company (NASACO) of the United Republic of Tanzania.

11. UNCTAD has continued to provide advisory and technical support to the SADC Industry and Trade Coordinating Division (SITCD) during the initial stages of its endeavour to elaborate a trade protocol to the SADC Treaty. Assistance has also been provided to SITCD through a project to analyse and develop strategic action for SADC member States, including the front-line States to enter into actual negotiations and drafting of the trade protocol. Assistance has further been provided to SITCD through a project to analyse and develop strategic action for SADC member States, including the front-line States, to cope with the results of the Uruguay Round of Multilateral Trade Negotiations and the emerging international trading system.

2. United Nations Development Programme

12. As part of United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) activities in the front-line and other neighbouring States, technical assistance is provided to the SADC member States in the following areas: (a) human resource development in the social sectors for the development of education, health, human settlements (housing), water and sanitation, grass-roots initiatives and popular participation; (b) institution-building for governance, public sector management and reform, aid coordination, economic and financial management; (c) productive areas such as agricultural and rural development, food security, private sector development including small-to-medium scale enterprises, employment creation, industrial development, promotion of science and technology, reconstruction of labour-intensive basic infrastructure (such as feeder roads); and (d) environment and natural resources management in terms of their protection, conservation and utilization, including combating deforestation and desertification.

13. Coordination has been carried out for emergency and humanitarian assistance activities in the case of countries that are in special development conditions such as Angola and Mozambique. UNDP and the Government of Angola are facing the challenge to move forward with the preparation of the grounds for the transition from a situation characterized predominantly by humanitarian assistance

activities to one dominated primarily by rehabilitation, reconstruction and development operations. In Mozambique, UNDP and the Government are moving ahead with rehabilitation and development activities. For these countries, Trust Funds have been set up under the management of UNDP.

14. In terms of disaster mitigation, UNDP provided emergency assistance as follows: Angola - support to the demining unit; Botswana - drought relief monitoring and coordination and the strengthening of national capacity for disaster management; Lesotho - drought relief coordination; Malawi - coordination of drought disaster; Mozambique - cholera control, assessment of environmental impact of Katina oil spill, emergency assistance in the aftermath of the cyclone Nadia, and district development mapping; Namibia - strengthening of the United Nations Disaster Management Team; Tanzania - support to flood victims in Korogwe and Zanzibar and to the Burundi refugees; Zambia - support during drought emergency and cholera outbreak; and Zimbabwe - drought preparedness and mitigation and support to the technical secretariat of the Drought Relief Task Force.

3. United Nations Environment Programme

15. The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) provided support to facilitate the participation of the front-line States and neighbouring States in the African Global Consultations of Government-designated experts on the International Technical Guidelines for Safety in Biotechnology held in Cairo, Egypt in July and December 1995, respectively. It also continued to maintain close relations with SADC and its member States through support for specific actions relating to drought and desertification in this subregion. The actions taken include a planning and programming workshop held in Pretoria in South Africa in March 1995 and a SADC consultative meeting held in Windhoek, Namibia, in January 1996 to review progress in the subregional action programmes preparation process in the SADC region.

16. At the national level, UNEP continued to cooperate with the front-line States to strengthen their existing environmental policies, laws and institutions and to implement national strategies and action plans for sustainable development. Within the framework of the Attachment Programme, UNEP provided support for an attachment training of Senior Legal Adviser/Officers from Mozambique and Malawi to the Environmental Law and Institutions Programme Activity Centre in UNEP.

4. World Food Programme

17. The World Food Programme (WFP) continues to collaborate with the front-line States. Since the last reporting period (October 1992 to June 1994), substantial assistance has been provided for both emergency and development operations. From July 1994 to June 1996, WFP committed a total of US$ 176 million to Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Swaziland, Tanzania and Zambia. Most of this assistance, US$ 153.9 million or 87 per cent, was allocated to emergency projects with the remainder programmed for development projects.

18. A substantial proportion of emergency assistance provided, US$ 65.1 million, went to countries affected by drought. WFP distributed emergency food rations, and implemented food-for-work projects where possible, in Zambia, Mozambique, Tanzania, Malawi, Lesotho and Swaziland. WFP also provided emergency assistance worth about US$ 88.8 million to Rwandan and Burundian refugees in Tanzania and a small portion of the assistance went to Angolan and Zairian refugees in Zambia.

19. New development assistance approved from July 1994 to June 1996 included a reconstruction and rehabilitation programme in Mozambique and a vulnerable group feeding programme in Malawi. WFP, together with the World Bank, has launched the reconstruction and rehabilitation programme to assist in the resettlement of refugees and the return of internally displaced persons, including demobilized soldiers, through the rehabilitation of the health and education basic infrastructure destroyed during the war. WFP committed US$ 11.9 million to cover the food-for-work component of this project. For the development project in Malawi, WFP committed US$ 10.2 million.

5. United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat)

20. The United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (UNCHS (Habitat)) made a significant contribution to the formulation of the Community Rehabilitation and National Reconciliation Programme for Angola, which was presented to the Round-Table Conference in Brussels on 25-27 September 1995. In response to a request from the Government of Mozambique for Sustainable Cities Programme demonstration projects in Maputo and Nampula, project documents have been developed and implementation is expected to commence in 1996. UNCHS (Habitat) assisted the Government of Namibia in developing the National Housing Programme (commonly known as the Build Together Programme) which was based on the principle of support to community and individual efforts.

21. UNCHS (Habitat) is continuing to execute the "Sustainable Dar es Salaam Project" in Tanzania which has successfully introduced a participatory environmental planning and management process and attracted considerable support from numerous donor agencies and the Government. The process introduced in Dar es Salaam is currently being extended to other urban centres throughout the country. As a cooperating agency, UNCHS (Habitat) is supporting the Government of Zambia in developing the "National Urban and Semi-Urban Settlements Management Programme". UNCHS (Habitat) provided technical assistance to the Government of Zimbabwe in the preparation of National Shelter Strategies and strengthened the institutional capacity in policy-making and housing programming at the national, provincial and local levels.

6. International Labour Organization

22. The following summaries are the activities of the International Labour Organization (ILO) in the front-line States: Botswana: development of national population policy, follow-up programme of the factories inspectorate; Lesotho: employment policy formulation and labour market analysis, strengthening of the factories inspectorate (OSH Unit) of the Ministry of Labour and Employment,

entrepreneurship for labour-based road maintenance contractors, skill development for employment and capacity enhancement at Thaba Tseka Skills Training Centre (TSTC); Namibia: manpower survey and establishment of a labour market information system, assistance to employers in Namibia, establishment of a population planning unit, affirmative action project, technical support for the initiation of a social security scheme in Namibia, consultancy on draft employment policy, human resources development for community-based rehabilitation of persons with disabilities; South Africa: prevention and resolution of conflict and promotion of workplace democracy, Improve Your Business training project for trainers and managers for managing diversity, strengthening South African employers through technical cooperation activities, assistance for the preparation of Employment Standards Statute, strengthening of teaching capacities of the Civil Engineering Department of the University of Natal, workers' education assistance to farm workers; Swaziland: TSS-1 Study on unemployment in Swaziland, follow-up programme of the factories inspectorate of the Ministry of Labour and Public Service; Regional: promotion of women in private sector activities through employers' organizations.

7. World Health Organization

23. During the period 1995-1996, health policy experts have been appointed in the World Health Organization (WHO) office in Luanda, in order to support the Ministry of Health in the development of a health policy, integrating both the short-term demobilization and relief aspects, to the more long-term ones towards sustainable health development. A health planning adviser was seconded for a two-year period to assist the Ministry of Health in health policy development. United Nations Volunteers (UNVs) have been recruited to work with the provincial authorities in epidemiological surveillance, prevention of communicable diseases, and development of health services at the provincial level.

24. In 1995, a technical support mission was sent to Lesotho with overall objective of strengthening the Ministry of Health's negotiating position, internally and externally with partners; and to review the national health development plan and develop a strategy for resource mobilization and donor coordination. In March 1996, technical support was extended to the Sectoral Round-Table Consultations in Lesotho (agriculture, environment, tourism, health and population).

25. The great influx of returnees and the sporadic cyclones that hit Mozambique in 1995 contributed to an outbreak of meningococcus meningitis in October in the northern part of the country, as well as several other communicable diseases. WHO provided the Ministry of Health with medicines and medical supplies to deal with these outbreaks.

26. In 1994-1995, following the support provided in the area of health policy and planning as well as in definition of proposals for decentralized projects through bilaterals, WHO's work focused on the following: definition of a post-war strategy for rehabilitation of the public health sector and sustained development; definition of possible health-care financing alternative; technical support and training of nationals in developing a health insurance scheme;

completing policy frameworks on resource allocation and urban health care; and providing technical support in the areas of health insurance.

8. World Bank

27. The Bank has actively worked with the countries of southern Africa and with SADC. The current (FY96) list of projects approved are as follows: Angola, social action project, $24 million; Lesotho, road rehabilitation and maintenance project, $40 million; Mozambique, health sector recovery programme, $98.7 million; Malawi, social action fund project, $56 million, fiscal restructuring and deregulation programme, $102 million, fiscal restructuring and deregulation programme (IDA reflows), $4.4 million, primary education project, $22.5 million; Zimbabwe, enterprise development project, $70 million. Efforts to increase the growth of export-based output and to broaden participation in economic activity, in particular by indigenous firms, will be supported.

9. International Monetary Fund

28. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has continued to cooperate with the front-line States and their neighbouring countries through contacts between the Director of the Fund's Office at the United Nations (who is also the Special Representative of the Fund at the United Nations) and directly in the context of its work with these countries. The main vehicles for cooperation include: financial assistance, external debt and aid coordination, policy advice, surveillance and technical assistance.

29. The Malawian Government intensified its adjustment efforts in early 1995 in the context of a comprehensive medium-term programme. The programme was subsequently supported by an Enhanced Structural Adjustment Facility (ESAF) arrangement (for an amount of SDR 46 million, 90 per cent of quota). In June 1996, the Fund approved Mozambique's request for a new three-year ESAF arrangement for an amount of SDR 75.6 million (90 per cent of quota). The Fund is providing technical assistance through the posting of a customs administration adviser in Maputo; a Fund resident representative will also be posted in Maputo during 1996.

30. The Fund's Fiscal Affairs Department (FAD) has provided technical assistance to Namibia through a mission on tax administration (in December 1995) and through long-term advisers in the areas of general fiscal/budget operations, tax administration and tax computerization. FAD consultants visited Swaziland in March 1995 and in April 1996 to help reform the income tax law. A Monetary and Exchange Affairs Department (MAE) mission was in Swaziland in January 1995 to provide technical assistance in foreign exchange management and banking supervision. An MAE consultant visited Swaziland in August 1995 to advise the authorities on reform options for the Swaziland Savings and Development Bank.

31. Tanzania continued to benefit from Fund technical assistance, most recently in the areas of monetary management and statistics. Following completion of the rights accumulation programme (1992-1995), Zambia's arrears to the Fund (SDR 830 billion) were cleared in December 1995 and parallel SAF/ESAF

arrangements (SDR 884 million, equivalent to 243 per cent of quota) were approved. MAE continues to provide technical assistance to the Bank of Zambia, most recently through an expert on bank supervision. The Fund's MAE department has provided technical assistance to the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe to review monetary and foreign exchange operations, securities markets and information technology.

10. Universal Postal Union

32. The Universal Postal Union (UPU) assisted the postal administrations of the countries concerned, mainly in modernizing their organizational structures and in improving the quality of their service to the urban and rural communities they serve. The main thrust is on reorganizing the postal sector into a self-financing entity so that it ceases to be a drain on public expenditure. The UPU assistance to the front-line States takes one of several of the following forms: expert mission for sector review; execution of technical assistance programme financed by the UPU, UNDP or other sources; training programmes in different management and operational fields; financing participation in high-level regional meetings; supply of equipment to help improve postal infrastructure; and assistance to generate international assistance for development programmes. The countries benefiting from these activities include Angola, Botswana, Mozambique, Namibia, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

11. World Meteorological Organization

33. The World Meteorological Organization (WMO) has continued to cooperate with SADC countries, on an individual and collective basis. A major regional project being implemented involves two drought monitoring centres, located in Harare and Nairobi. Under phase II of the project, which started in January 1995, US$ 500,000 was provided for both centres. WMO is also working with the Southern African Transport and Communications Commission (SATCC), the SADC body responsible for coordinating the development of meteorological services, to secure an additional contribution of US$ 500,000 for the Harare Centre from the Belgium Government.

34. In 1995, WMO completed the implementation of the FINNIDA/SATCC/WMO Meteorology project, started in 1987, in conjunction with the Finnish Meteorological Institute. The total project budget amounted approximately to US$ 15 million, of which US$ 6.3 million was used for fellowships and experts services, and US$ 8.7 million for equipment. The project made a substantial contribution to the development of a core of well-trained scientific and technical experts in the various specialized areas of meteorology. It also helped establish a strong foundation for meaningful sustainable development at both national and regional levels.

35. In the water sector, WMO, in collaboration with SADC-ELMS (Environment and Land Management Sector), has developed the project for the SADC regional component of the World Hydrological Cycle Observing System (WHYCOS), which has received funding from the European Union totalling 1,964,000 ECUs. The expected outputs of the projects are: the establishment of a network of benchmark

hydrological stations equipped with satellite-based Data Collection Platform (DCP), the improvement of data exchange and dissemination system through the use of WMO's Global Telecommunication System and electronic computer networks, the establishment of hydrological databases, and the production of hydrological user-oriented products. The attainment of these objectives will be supported also with training programmes and institutional capacity-building. The expected project duration is two years.

12. International Maritime Organization

36. The International Maritime Organization (IMO) is arranging various projects for implementation in 1997, or as soon as possible thereafter, with a view to assisting the front-line States to establish or upgrade their maritime administrations. It will also conduct feasibility studies to identify a suitable location for the establishment of a Global Maritime Distress and Safety System for Eastern and Southern Africa, which will have a beneficial impact on these States.

13. World Intellectual Property Organization

37. In January 1994, the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) prepared and sent to the Tanzanian Government suggestions for the revision of the industrial property law. In March, two Tanzanian government officials undertook a study visit to WIPO at the invitation of the Director-General of WIPO. WIPO also organized for them a visit to the Swiss Federal Intellectual Property Office in Berne and the Swiss Society for Author's Rights in Musical Works (SUISA) in Zurich. In August, WIPO organized in Gaborone an African introductory course on industrial property in cooperation with the Government of Botswana.

38. A WIPO official undertook a mission in November 1994 to Dar es Salaam to install a CD-ROM workstation offered by WIPO. Training in the use of the various searching methods offered by the CD-ROM station was given to the staff concerned. In 1994, WIPO delivered free state-of-the-art search reports to Botswana and Tanzania and provided free copies of patent documents to Botswana and Zimbabwe. During 1994 and 1995, the following WIPO training fellowships were granted to government officials from the following countries: Angola, Botswana, United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

39. In October, WIPO organized a study visit for two Botswana government officials to WIPO's headquarters in Geneva, where they held discussions with WIPO officials on the revised draft industrial property bill. WIPO organized the National Seminar on Copyright and Neighbouring Rights in August in Kitwe in cooperation with the Government of Zambia. In 1995, WIPO delivered free state-of-the-art search reports to the United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe and also provided free copies of patent documents to Zimbabwe.

14. United Nations Industrial Development Organization

40. In 1995-1996, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization's (UNIDO) technical cooperation programmes with the front-line States focused on, inter alia, the following: developing support strategies and formulating policies for accelerated industrial development; providing support for developing existing industries and industrial infrastructures; private sector development with emphasis on strengthening private sector institutions; small and medium enterprises development; and industrial information investment and technology promotion.

UNITED
NATIONS

A

General Assembly

Distr.
GENERAL

A/51/529
21 October 1996
ENGLISH
ORIGINAL: RUSSIAN

Fifty-first session
Agenda items 24, 64, 96, 97 and 98

LAW OF THE SEA

THE ROLE OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY IN THE CONTEXT OF INTERNATIONAL SECURITY, DISARMAMENT AND OTHER RELATED FIELDS

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC COOPERATION

ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES FOR DEVELOPMENT

Letter dated 18 October 1996 from the Permanent Representatives of Azerbaijan and Kazakstan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

We have the honour to transmit herewith the text of the joint statement on Caspian Sea questions adopted by the Presidents of the Azerbaijani Republic and the Republic of Kazakstan in Baku on 16 September 1996 (see annex).

We should be grateful if the text of this letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the General Assembly under agenda items 24, 64, 96, 97 and 98.

(Signed) E. KOULIEV
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of the
Azerbaijani Republic to the
United Nations

(Signed) A. ARYSTANBEKOVA
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of the
Republic of Kazakstan to the
United Nations

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ANNEX

Joint statement on Caspian Sea questions adopted by the Presidents of Azerbaijan and Kazakstan in Baku on 16 September 1996

The President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Mr. G. A. Aliyev, and the President of the Republic of Kazakstan, Mr. N. A. Nazarbaev, following their discussion in Baku on 16 September 1996 of questions relating to the legal status of the Caspian Sea and cooperation among the littoral States in the exploration, development and use of the Caspian's mineral and biological resources and protection of its natural environment, reached the following mutual understanding.

1. The Parties consider that the immediate and urgent task of the littoral States is to elaborate and conclude, on the basis of consensus, a convention on the legal status of the Caspian Sea. The legal status of the Caspian Sea must be based on the generally recognized rules and principles of international law and the international treaty practice of States situated on the shores of similar bodies of water and include the regulation of questions of navigation, the use of biological and mineral resources, the ecology, including changes in the sea level, etc., and the definition of the jurisdictional limits of the littoral States on the basis of respect for their sovereign rights over their respective parts and sectors of the Caspian Sea.

Agreements on specific types of activity on the Caspian may be concluded on the basis of a convention on the legal status of the Caspian Sea.

2. The Parties agree that the activities of the littoral States on the Caspian Sea must be conducted in keeping with the following principles:

- Compliance with the principles of the Charter of the United Nations providing for respect for sovereignty, territorial integrity, political independence, the sovereign equality of States and the non-use of force or threat of force;

- The demilitarization of the Caspian and its use exclusively for peaceful purposes;

- The maintenance of the Caspian Sea as a zone of peace, good-neighbourliness, friendship and cooperation, and the peaceful settlement of all questions concerning the Caspian Sea;

- The protection of the environment and the prevention of the pollution of the Caspian Sea;

- The conservation, reproduction and rational use of the biological resources of the Caspian Sea;

- The responsibility of the States bordering the Caspian Sea for any damage to the environment or each other as a result of their use of the Caspian Sea and exploitation of its resources;

- The freedom and safety of the commercial shipping of the States bordering the Caspian Sea;

- And compliance with any other principles that may be agreed upon among the littoral States.

3. The Parties agree that only vessels belonging to the States bordering the Caspian Sea may sail on the Caspian Sea.

The procedure and conditions for navigation on the Caspian may be defined in separate agreements.

4. The Parties consider that the delimitation of the Caspian Sea between the littoral States in one form or another is fully consistent with international practice and the principles and rules of international law and will facilitate their cooperation on the basis of equal rights and mutual advantage and help to attract investments and modern technology for the purpose of the effective, rational and safe use of the natural resources of the Caspian.

5. The Parties recognize each other's rights and the rights of each of the littoral States to carry out activities connected with the exploitation of the mineral and biological resources in their respective parts and sectors of the Caspian Sea, and they will exchange concrete proposals on the development of mutually advantageous cooperation, including geophysical and geological survey activities and the exploitation of hydrocarbon deposits, bearing in mind the experience and capabilities of the Parties.

6. The Parties are in favour of intensifying and raising the level of negotiations between the littoral States with respect to the legal status of the Caspian Sea and to this end endorse the proposal to hold a meeting of the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the five States bordering the Caspian Sea to conclude a mutually acceptable agreement on its legal status.

DONE in Baku on 16 September 1996 in two copies, each in the Azerbaijani, Kazak and Russian languages.

(Signed) Heydar ALIYEV
President of the
Azerbaijani Republic

(Signed) Nursultan NAZARBAEV
President of the Republic
of Kazakstan

UNITED
NATIONS

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General Assembly

Distr.
GENERAL

A/51/530
21 October 1996

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

Fifty-first session
Agenda item 141

REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL ON THE ACTIVITIES OF THE OFFICE OF INTERNAL OVERSIGHT SERVICES

Note by the Secretary-General

In accordance with paragraph 5 (e) (iii) of General Assembly resolution 48/218 B of 29 July 1994, the Secretary-General has the honour to transmit to the members of the General Assembly the comments of the Joint Inspection Unit on final reports produced by the Office of Internal Oversight Services.

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ANNEX

Comments of the Joint Inspection Unit on final reports produced by the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS)

REPORTS OF THE OFFICE OF INTERNAL OVERSIGHT SERVICES BEFORE THE FIFTY-FIRST SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

1. Pursuant to paragraph 5 (e) (iii) of General Assembly resolution 48/218 B of 29 July 1994, the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) presents its comments on the following final reports produced by the Office of Internal Oversight Services which have been prepared for the consideration of the General Assembly at its fifty-first session.

2. As stipulated in resolution 48/218 B, the reports of the Office of Internal Oversight Services were conveyed to the General Assembly by the Secretary-General. JIU assumes that the Secretary-General is in agreement with those reports on which he conveyed no comments.

3. There are five additional reports of the Office due to be presented to the General Assembly at its fifty-first session as follows:

Review of the programme and administrative practices in the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat)

Review of the programme and administrative practices in the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)

Audit of catering services

Audit of outsourcing practices

Audit of the transition and preliquidation phase of the United Nations Peace Forces

4. Since those reports were not available by the time the present comments were prepared, the Unit was unable to comment on them.

5. In this regard, the Unit would again like to draw the attention of the General Assembly to paragraph 5 (e) (iii) of its resolution 48/218 B. In this regard the General Assembly may wish to decide on whether to consider reports of the Office prior to the comments of the Board of Auditors and JIU or wait until these comments are available, it being understood that the absence of JIU comments would be due to non-receipt of the Office's final reports in time.

A. Report on review of the programme and administrative practices of the secretariat of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (A/50/719)

General comments

6. This review covers the full range of the substantive programme of work as well as the administration and management of the UNCTAD secretariat. Conclusions and recommendations are grouped under two subheadings: issues of substance, and issues relating to administration and organization.

7. The Inspectors concur in general with the objectives and recommendations of the Office aimed at improving efficiency and accountability in the management of the financial and human resources of the UNCTAD secretariat. They also support fully the emphasis placed in the review on the need for a coherent technical cooperation policy and profile as well as for strengthening collaboration with other relevant organizations within the United Nations system, more particularly with the regional economic commissions.

8. It is observed, moreover, that the proposed reorientations are even more forcefully recommended by JIU in its own report entitled "The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD): review of institutional and programme issues" (JIU/REP/96/1), which was submitted to the Conference at its tenth session held at Midrand, South Africa, in April 1996.

Specific comments

9. Views of the beneficiaries of UNCTAD programmes. The Inspectors note that in reviewing the quality, relevance and impact of UNCTAD regular and technical cooperation programmes, the Office limits its analysis to UNCTAD secretariat headquarters, no doubt because the analysis focuses on administrative and management issues. However, since it recommends important programmatic changes, including in the area of technical cooperation, it would have been useful to indicate, to the extent possible, how the proposed changes correspond to the expressed views and needs of the primary beneficiaries of UNCTAD programmes, particularly in the developing countries and the countries in transition to market economies. Such analysis of supply and demand would have further enhanced the authority and credibility of the Office's review findings and conclusions.

10. Technical cooperation and extrabudgetary resources. The Inspectors concur with the observations in paragraph 22 regarding the need for more coherent and effective central oversight of the use of technical cooperation and extrabudgetary resources, but believe that corrective arrangements should not be left exclusively to a secretariat committee comprising directors of divisions, as proposed by the Office. The policy guidance of the Trade and Development Board would also seem necessary.

11. Ratio of General Service staff. Statements made in paragraphs 27 and 31 regarding the proportion of General Service staff to total staff in the secretariat of UNCTAD should have been substantiated with comparisons with other departments of the United Nations Secretariat. While the optimal cost-effective

ratio of General Service staff to total staff would be exceedingly difficult to establish for all departments and programmes of the United Nations Secretariat because of differences in the nature and scope of programme mandates, average ratios can be derived easily from annual Consultative Committee on Administrative Questions (CCAQ) personnel statistics.

12. On the basis of 1993 statistics, the proportion of General Service staff to total staff in the United Nations Secretariat as a whole was 66 per cent; in the entire United Nations system it was 65 per cent, while in UNCTAD it was 43 per cent. Some possible conclusions are: (a) the UNCTAD secretariat is probably overstaffed at the Professional level, as stressed by the Office; (b) it is optimally applying innovation technologies to its work, probably better than other parts of the United Nations Secretariat, to the extent that the Professional staff require only limited General Service support, especially in text and data processing functions; or (c) it is perhaps seriously understaffed at the General Service level, where the Office recommends a 15 to 20 per cent reduction in order to achieve "a more appropriate ratio of General Service to Professional posts". This last recommendation appears difficult to support since it would only further aggravate the present imbalance between General Service and Professional staff in UNCTAD.

B. Report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on the audit of procurement handled by the Contracts and Procurement Service of the Department for Development Support and Management Services (A/50/945)

General comments

13. The Inspectors commend the choice of reviewing the procurement practices of a leading economic department of the Organization, the Department for Development Support and Management Services, and its Contracts and Procurement Service. This is a relevant response by the Office to the interest and growing desire of the Member States of the United Nations to ensure transparency in the procurement process and shed more light on those who have been given the responsibility of providing goods and services and how this is being managed.

14. The report addresses a number of critical areas in procurement and contracting. Its findings make the case convincingly that the Department has a number of weaknesses in the application of procurement and contracting regulations of the United Nations that must be corrected to ensure a system of full and open competition. Identified and illustrated in the report, procurement and contracting irregularities may indicate that the Department's practice does not ensure delivery of services and goods in the most economic and efficient manner.

15. Twenty-six contracts have been selected for review. The Inspectors assume that the findings of the report are representative and material (the report itself contains no indication of this) in the context of the Department's total procurement and contracting activity. If this is the case, the Inspectors strongly support the overall conclusion that strengthening the planning, monitoring and control of the procurement process of the Department is

justified. In fact, the Inspectors believe a broader review to determine whether additional corrective actions for the system as a whole or for individuals who are abusing the system might be required.

Recommendations

16. The report contains eight recommendations, which the Department's management reported were either already implemented or would be implemented. For those yet to be implemented, establishing some time-frames for implementation would be helpful.

17. One of the findings disclosed that in 46 per cent of the cases reviewed, the technical specifications were either restrictive in nature or sole-source, and precluded full and competitive bidding. The Office recommended that specifications should be more generic and provide equal opportunity to all bidders. As with many of the recommendations, the Department agreed to follow the recommendation "to the maximum extent of staff resources available". In the Inspectors' view, owing to the paramount importance of this recommendation, the Department's response should not be conditional.

18. JIU is of the opinion that full and unconditional implementation of the report's recommendations would contribute to the establishment of a general environment that supports a fully open and transparent competitive contracting and procurement system.

C. Report on the in-depth evaluation of peacekeeping operations: termination phase (E/AC.51/1996/3)

19. The evaluation report discusses broad subjects concerning the termination phase of peacekeeping operations. The Inspectors support the emphasis of the report on learning from experience and translating the lessons thus acquired into practice by formulating or improving policies, standard operating procedures, guidelines, and so on. Although the evaluation report provides a good overview of the termination phase, some of the subjects are not dealt with in sufficient detail. This is understandable in view of the existing page-limitation rule. Member States would, therefore, have a more thorough picture of the termination phase if reports on specific problems or subjects were prepared as a follow-up to the present evaluation report.

20. The Inspectors note that this is the first report on the assessment of the termination phase of peacekeeping operations as a whole and consider it a good introduction to the topic. One of the issues dealt with in the evaluation report is "peace-building during the mission" (section III, A). At the request of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), JIU is currently preparing a report on peace-building in which it intends to take into consideration the findings of the evaluation report.

21. The Inspectors believe that peace-building is an important element to achieve lasting peace as conflicts may break out again unless the economic and social needs of people are addressed sufficiently. In their view, if Member States decide that peace-building activities are necessary for a particular

conflict situation, such activities should start during the peacekeeping operation to ensure that the peacekeeping investment is not lost. There should also be more close coordination and consultations between the United Nations and Member States. Successful peace-building also requires effective coordination of activities among the organizations of the United Nations system.

22. The evaluation report briefly discusses peace-building activities carried out by some of the organizations during past peacekeeping missions. However, more detailed examination of how these organizations coordinated such activities and the transition process from peacekeeping to peace-building would have been useful. The importance of cooperation among the United Nations, regional organizations and non-governmental organizations in peace-related activities has been recognized.

23. The knowledge of effective transition process from a peacekeeping operation, for which the United Nations is responsible, to a peace-building mission, in which a regional organization may play a lead role, would be valuable for the planning and implementation of peacekeeping operations. Therefore, the inclusion of an assessment of the relationships between the United Nations and these organizations at the termination phase would have increased the usefulness of the evaluation report.

24. The evaluation report states, in paragraph 2, that it is based on published United Nations documentation, relevant internal documents, external studies and interviews with United Nations staff members involved with peacekeeping operations. It synthesizes the findings of previous reports and studies, which is useful. On the other hand, in their comments on the final in-depth evaluation report on the start-up phase (E/AC.51/1995/2), the Inspectors stated that since peacekeeping was the area in which many Member States participate actively, consultations with their representatives would have been useful to identify relevant issues. The in-depth evaluation report, which is at present under review, does not include interviews with them. Such interviews, particularly with the representatives of troop-contributing countries, would have generated new ideas and information, and consequently made this well-written evaluation report even more interesting to read.

D. In-depth evaluation of the Department of Public Information (E/AC.51/1996/2)

25. The Inspectors regard this report as timely, especially because the effective dissemination of information about the United Nations activities (including its reform efforts) is now crucial to improve the public image of the United Nations, which is under acute financial constraints.

26. It is recalled, in this connection, that JIU has also produced a number of relevant reports, including: "Coordination in the field of public information activities among the members of the United Nations system" (JIU/REP/81/2); "Review of the United Nations public information networks: reorganization of the Department of Public Information" (JIU/REP/89/5) and "Review of United Nations public information networks: United Nations information centres" (JIU/REP/89/6).

27. In the meantime, the Inspectors note that the Committee for Programme and Coordination (CPC), at its thirty-sixth session in June 1996, reviewed the Office report in question and decided to transmit its conclusions and recommendations on the report to the Committee on Information at its nineteenth session for consideration and appropriate action. The Inspectors agree with the conclusions and recommendations of CPC. Having stated this, the Inspectors wish to offer the following additional comments on the report.

28. The Inspectors welcome the issues this report brought up and the recommendations associated with them, such as the need for improvement in the quality of United Nations publications. The Inspectors believe that it is of critical importance that benchmarks and procedures be established to ensure that United Nations publications are of the desired quality. They agree with the concerns stressed in the report which point out that the readers' needs ought to be taken into account and their feedback should result in actions within the Department of Public Information that meet readers' demands.

29. The Inspectors note with concern several aspects of the report. In particular, they believe, as mentioned earlier, that in view of the current financial constraints of the United Nations and the reform efforts, it is essential that the public understands the activities of the United Nations, and its changing role, as well as its reform efforts. More than ever before, there is need for support from the public to the United Nations activities that can only be achieved with an adequate information base and dissemination.

30. Another area in which the Inspectors note some ambiguity is the functions of the Department of Public Information, as stated in the report. The report states, as a given, what is expected of the Department and recommends that the News Coverage Service issue regularly and post electronically "information on newsworthy developments". Information on what the Department, on behalf of the United Nations, should pursue ought to be carefully re-examined in the light of the complexity of worldwide events and because it is not certain that the United Nations is in a position to address these issues in the proposed way. In the Inspectors' view, the report does not take these issues into account in an appropriate manner and it could have provided a more thorough analysis of this question.

31. The Inspectors note the following statement in the report: "DPI materials ... cannot compete with the capacity of news agencies to cover breaking news". In their opinion, this comparison is unclear. If what was being compared was news agencies to the Department of Public Information, the Inspectors believe that it is not intended that the Department compete with these agencies.

32. The Inspectors are encouraged by the coverage of the thematically integrated priority areas being pursued following resolution 48/44 B of 10 December 1993 and the 1994 report of the Secretary-General (A/49/385, paras. 6 and 7). However they note that further development of this matter has not been pursued sufficiently. It is the overall view of the Inspectors that the report focuses much on the processes and not on the substance of the activities of the Department of Public Information.

33. The Inspectors are of the view that the report does not dwell on some vital issues. For instance, the need to improve the technical skills of the staff by training and the need for adequate services such as suitable substantive databases could have been considered.

34. The Inspectors note that in many instances the report deals with the lack of resources available in the Department of Public Information. However, in the Inspectors' view, the report contains an inappropriate underlying assumption in recommendation 13, where the aforementioned shortage of resources appears to have been ignored. In this regard, the report advocates in paragraph 47, in the same section in which recommendation 13 was included, that the Department of Public Information should pool resources with other agencies for a "daily 10-minute news feed through partners who already operate transponders on the Intelsat network". In the Inspectors' opinion, a more in-depth cost analysis for the advocated daily 10-minute news feed should be pursued which would lead to conclusions and recommendations that are realistic in the light of the resources available.

E. Report on strengthening the role of evaluation findings in programme design, delivery and policy directives (A/51/88)

35. The above report is of particular interest to JIU because of its deep involvement in evaluation activities for almost 20 years. 1/ It gives a fairly good picture of the status of evaluation in the United Nations. The Inspectors are generally encouraged by further development of the evaluation function within departments and offices of the United Nations. They, however, observe with concern the low percentage reported by the Office of actual self-evaluations of substantive activities compared with evaluation commitments made and stress the importance of encouraging and assisting the various departments and offices to carry out self-evaluation exercises as stipulated in the Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning, the Programme Aspects of the Budget, the Monitoring of Implementation and the Methods of Evaluation (ST/SGB/PPBME/Rules/1 (1987)).

36. The Inspectors believe that full and unconditional compliance with these Regulations and Rules will ensure meaningful linkages between evaluation on the one hand and the programme planning and budgeting on the other. Regulation 6.2 of the Regulations and Rules, in particular, stipulates that all programmed activities in the medium-term plan should be evaluated at least once during the plan period.

37. The Inspectors note with interest the Office's findings on the implementation of oversight function in selected departments and offices. In their view, a comprehensive analysis showing, preferably in a tabular form, oversight activities in every department and office would be very useful. Finally, the Inspectors consider it encouraging that the Office intends to issue guidelines on departmental oversight and to assist departments and offices in implementing this function.

F. Triennial review of the implementation of the recommendations made by the Committee for Programme and Coordination at its thirty-second session on the evaluation of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (E/AC.51/1996/4)

General comments

38. The triennial review conducted to determine the extent to which CPC recommendations had been implemented is an objective summary of follow-up measures taken by UNHCR. The review compares recommendations relating to international protection and programmatic, administrative and financial matters with some good examples of implementation. It lacks, however, concluding remarks on whether the implementation measures are satisfactory, largely as planned, less than planned or better than planned.

39. In the summary, it is stated that progress has been mixed and at times a different approach had been taken by UNHCR from what had been recommended by CPC. The Inspectors consider that this could be further qualified by how much progress, in what areas and during what time span. The different approach taken by UNHCR also needs to be explained. Any serious deviations that are likely to have consequences for the achievement of the objectives should be singled out. Similarly, the reasons for the deviations and the consequent options available to UNHCR should be identified. In other words, a global assessment of the implementation measures should be more clearly stated.

Methods of data collection

40. The review states in paragraph 3: "As was the case with past triennial reviews, the present report is based on a review of the relevant documentation, information submitted by the units concerned and interviews for clarification and verification purposes." It is not clear what "past triennial" reviews and by what bodies. In the Inspectors' opinion, for a better understanding of the continuity of the review, an explanation of the relevant past reviews of UNHCR would be helpful.

Presentation of the report and recommendations

41. The presentation of the review appropriately follows the breakdown used by the UNHCR Subcommittees on International Protection and on Administrative and Financial Matters (para. 2). The Inspectors believe that the report could, however, make better use of its parallelism by consistently listing the CPC recommendation - without grouping - followed directly by the implementation measures. This would facilitate understanding as to whether the implementation examples have directly achieved their objectives. The section on training, for example (sect. III, F), lists three recommendations before their respective implementation (paras. 35 and 36). These, however, are mixed and do not provide chronological reference to the recommendations. Similarly, paragraphs 37 and 38 provide examples, in mixed order, for recommendations 12 and 14, with implicit, if any, substantive reference to recommendation 13.

42. Furthermore, the Inspectors point out that some of the issues addressed in the recommendations by CPC have also been the object of specific consideration

by JIU. "The review of financial resources allocated by the United Nations system to activities by non-governmental organizations" (JIU/REP/96/4), for example, points out similar recommendations with recommendations 6, 9 and 18. The assessment of the Office thereon may be usefully complemented by JIU recommendations.

G. Programme performance of the United Nations for the biennium 1994-1995 (A/51/128 and Add.1)

43. This report was prepared by the Office pursuant to General Assembly resolution 48/218 B of 29 July 1994 and in accordance with the provisions of article V of the Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning, the Programme Aspects of the Budget, the Monitoring of Implementation and the Methods of Evaluation.

44. The Inspectors note that some programme elements and outputs included in the various programmes of work of the departments and offices do not always derive from the medium-term plan and other legislative mandates but from decisions taken by the programme managers. This fact makes it difficult to track the legislative basis of some of the programme elements and outputs and whether all the legislative mandates have been included in the pertinent programmes of work. The matching up of the programme activities and outputs with the legislative basis is crucial not only for preparing the programmes of work but also for assessing their impact.

45. The Inspectors note that the programme performance report remains basically descriptive. The Inspectors hope that, in the future, the programme performance reports will be more analytical.

46. The programme budget for the biennium 1994-1995 comprised 6,497 final outputs specifically identified. Of these outputs, 4,888, or 75.2 per cent, were actually implemented.

47. The main conclusion of the report is that "the balance sheet of what has been delivered, despite the various constrains, appears largely positive in terms of quality of outputs and services produced" (para. 31). However, this conclusion appears to contradict the statement contained in paragraph 2, which states: "It does not attempt to assess the quality of the outputs and services produced".

48. As to the other findings and conclusions, JIU wishes to make the following comments.

49. As stated in paragraph 31 of the report, the reporting on programme performance has to be seen in the context, among other things, of "the need to respond to the multitude of new demands and the challenging requirements of delivering while simultaneously reforming the structure and methods of work through an ongoing process of streamlining and reorganization". This question has been a major preoccupation of Member States since the last reform process, launched in 1986 through General Assembly resolution 41/213 of 19 December 1986. Although it is recognized that reform is a continuous process, a solid, stable

and competent secretariat is a pre-requisite for the effective and efficient functioning of any organization, the United Nations in this case. A continuous process of reform and streamlining brings uncertainties which can hinder the desired staff performance.

50. One major finding is that legislative bodies have often been seized with a wide range of documentation and reports, the purpose of which is not clear other than their general information nature. This question has certainly been a long-standing preoccupation of Member States. Many reports are mere repetitions of the previous ones. The Inspectors recommend that, except when political reasons warrant, the General Assembly should adopt as a matter of policy that no new reports should be requested without an assessment of the previous ones on the same subject.

51. Another major finding indicates that there are instances in which a large number of programme elements and outputs are reported postponed or terminated without adequate reasons. The Inspectors note that a number of programme elements and outputs are terminated or postponed upon decisions of the pertinent governing bodies but that this fact is not always reflected in the performance report. Furthermore, the Inspectors note that in such cases there is no indication as to whether programme elements and outputs have been included in the following programme budget.

52. Although Rule 105.2 of the Regulations and Rules empowers the heads of departments and offices to modify the approved programme budget by reformulating, postponing and/or terminating programme elements or outputs within any subprogramme, the lack of a clear justification as to what extent those changes are in pursuance of the objectives and strategy of the subprogramme as set out in the medium-term plan constitutes a contravention of the above Rule. The Secretary-General should take decisive action to remedy this deficiency.

53. The Inspectors commend the declared goal of the Office to continue emphasizing the need for adequate mechanisms and systems of programme oversight and control at departmental level through its audits, inspections and evaluations, but they wonder how the Office "will ensure that such mechanisms are established in various organizational units and used as a management tool" (para. 46).

54. Although not a conclusion, the report shows how budgetary constraints have had a negative impact on the implementation of mandated activities. This fact contravenes the various General Assembly resolutions instructing the Secretary-General to realize savings without affecting programme delivery negatively.

55. The report also brings out that the vacancy rate and the postponements of activities and outputs have been used as a budgetary tool for achieving savings at the expense of full implementation of mandated programmes and activities. The Inspectors caution against this trend.

56. The Inspectors note the achievements in terms of technological innovations throughout the Secretariat, although the productivity gained through automation alone is still far from compensating staff cuts.

H. Management audit of electronic mail in the United Nations Secretariat (A/50/1005)

General comments

57. JIU believes that this report of the Office is a very useful management audit of an activity that has become essential for the effectiveness of Secretariat performance. The report observes that electronic mail (e-mail) has served to improve horizontal and vertical communications throughout the Organization, both at Headquarters and in the field. The report also notes in paragraph 1, that, using the Internet, United Nations e-mail reaches "beyond the United Nations family to government missions, outside agencies and the millions of companies and individual subscribers throughout the world". As the report indicates, the heavy reliance placed on e-mail services now makes the system's availability, reliability and timeliness critical.

58. The Office suggests a number of specific measures for improving the management of e-mail in the United Nations Secretariat, which JIU supports. More importantly, the report indicates that the Office sees e-mail "as a possible platform for exercising the skills and techniques of the new United Nations management culture" (para. 2). However, it notes that the objectives informally established for e-mail are only technical in nature and do not "begin to harness the power of e-mail to change the culture and environment of the Organization" (para. 10). JIU strongly agrees, but believes it would be more useful to emphasize the use of information services and information technology overall, and not just e-mail, as an important means to help achieve the management reforms now being sought in the Secretariat.

59. The Office suggests including "Secretariat-wide access" as one of the objectives in a mission statement that it recommends be formulated for e-mail services. JIU certainly believes that this should be an objective and would like to have seen even more emphasis given to the importance of assuring access to e-mail for all members of the Secretariat who have need for it. Until all members of the Secretariat who could use e-mail, both at Headquarters and in the field, have full access, the full potential of this important management tool cannot be achieved, and the full conversion to electronic communications within the Secretariat will not be possible.

Recommendations

60. The report contains six recommendations, which JIU supports, and it indicates that most were accepted with implementation promptly initiated. JIU would suggest that specific time-frames should be established for those recommendations still to be implemented. It believes it would also be helpful to have those recommendations that were not accepted clarified, as well as what further steps will be taken regarding them.

61. Among the recommendations, the report urges giving more attention to the need for security since e-mail "is a communications system utilized by management to discuss sensitive topics" (para. 19). JIU very much shares this concern, and also urges the enhancement of security arrangements in order to

help avoid breakdowns of the system resulting from misuse by unauthorized persons.

62. In discussing its recommendation for mission management of objectives, the report notes that 'appropriate responsibility must be given to one person who would be responsible for managing the mission objective(s)' (para. 21). Since the Electronic Services Division is responsible for managing e-mail services and the report's suggested mission objectives, including, inter alia, increased productivity and utilization of the system, are beyond the mandate of the Division, the Office is concerned that 'objectives may not be achieved because responsibility would be decentralized and disjointed among multiple functional areas' (para. 25). For this reason, the report indicates that 'the Office will continue to pursue at higher levels within the Organization the establishment of overall responsibility for e-mail and the management of objectives' (para. 26). In supporting this position, JIU would add that responsibility for the management of e-mail services should be part of the responsibility for information services and information technology overall, and that the official with this responsibility be at a level high enough to be effective.

I. Report of the investigation of the allegation of misappropriation of United Nations assets at the United Nations Gift Centre (A/50/1004)

63. JIU finds the report a valuable contribution to the proper assessment of the broader issue of outsourcing of functions or activities in the United Nations. This particular report is a result of an investigation of allegations of misconduct reported by a source inside the Organization. The report analyses carefully the profit decrease observed in the operations of the United Nations Gift Centre. This decrease has appropriately been identified as a result of incorrect management practices and misconduct of personnel provided by the subcontractor to which the operation of the Gift Centre had been outsourced. The report focuses on internal control lapses, and highlights breaches of fundamental financial management practices.

64. In particular, the report highlights the risks involved in the outsourcing of an activity without sufficient control and supervision by the Organization. The damage to the United Nations, besides financial losses, would have been less if certain measures of caution had been taken, such as the following:

(a) A proper negotiation of the initial contract in order sufficiently to protect the interests of the United Nations (Why was the United Nations not assured the right to request and enforce removal of the General Manager of the subcontractor in such cases as those revealed in the report?);

(b) A sufficient degree of supervision and professional monitoring by the United Nations of the services provided by the subcontractor.

65. The Inspectors might offer further comments on the particular issues dealt with in the Office's investigation, in the report of JIU on outsourcing in the United Nations system, which is currently under preparation.

J. The management audit of global cargo and motor vehicle insurance programmes (A/51/302)

66. This report deals with an important aspect of United Nations expenditures namely, the global cargo insurance policy and the global third party liability insurance policy, with emphasis on peacekeeping operations, the management of which has been somewhat neglected.

67. The Inspectors would like to commend the quality of this report, in particular the methodology used and its concreteness and reader-friendly format.

68. The Inspectors support entirely all recommendations contained in the report and advise the General Assembly to approve them. Nevertheless, the Inspectors would like to add some comments and further recommendations.

69. The Inspectors note that this management audit is confined to two major objects of insurance in the United Nations. Taking into account the level of resources involved in insurance policies throughout the United Nations, the Inspectors recommend that a broader, similar management audit be conducted by the Office to cover all United Nations insured assets.

70. The Inspectors also recommend that the issue of insurance policies be taken within the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) with a view to exploring the possibilities of having common system-wide practices and procedures, including common insurance programmes.

71. The Inspectors note that the audit detected several flows in the insurance programmes of the peacekeeping forces, but did not elaborate on the causes of such flows. In particular, the report does not provide information regarding the extent to which the Department of Administration and Management and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations possess the necessary level of resources and expertise to properly negotiate, control and oversee the insurance programmes. The Inspectors recommend that this information be provided to the General Assembly before it takes a decision on this report.

72. The audit does not report whether the contracts signed with the concerned insurance companies were a result of international bidding. The Inspectors recommend that this information also be provided to the General Assembly, and in any case this aspect be considered if the recommended broader audit is undertaken.

73. The question of duplicate insurance coverage on the United Nations Angola Verification Mission (UNAVEM III) vehicles was of particular concern to the Inspectors. According to paragraph 34 of the report, the Office "recommended that the Field Administration and Logistics Division immediately advise UNAVEM III to end the duplicate insurance coverage on UNAVEM vehicles" by terminating its local insurance coverage. It is unclear whether UNAVEM III was able to do so and, if not, why not. The Inspectors are of the opinion that the decision to purchase or not local insurance coverage instead of increasing global insurance to first dollar coverage should be solely guided by cost-effectiveness and be in conformity with local regulations, which, in some

instances, make it mandatory to have local insurance coverage for all vehicles. This issue, therefore, needs to be clarified accordingly.

K. Review of the management structure in the civilian staff component of the United Nations Peace Forces (A/51/305)

74. This report was requested in General Assembly resolution 49/228 of 23 December 1994. Nevertheless, given that the United Nations Peace Forces (UNPF) is in the process of liquidation following the transfer of authority to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) Implementation Force (IFOR) as a result of the signature of the General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina (Dayton Accord), the recommendations address future peacekeeping missions as lessons learned.

75. The Inspectors note that the questions raised and recommendations made in the report are similar in nature to those contained in the JIU report entitled "Staffing of the United Nations peace-keeping and related missions (civilian component)" (JIU/REP/93/6, annex) which, although not referenced in the report, was welcomed by the Secretary-General as a valuable and timely contribution to both the planning and management aspects of field operations and approved by the General Assembly.

76. Therefore, the Inspectors support all the recommendations contained in the report while commending its quality, concreteness and reader-friendly presentation. Nevertheless, the Inspectors would like to add a few comments.

77. The Inspectors consider that the question of the handling of contracts by the peacekeeping operations managers should be further reviewed, especially whether all contracts and procurements are subjected duly to national and international biddings. The example provided in paragraph 49 of the report calls for the need to take immediate remedial action in this regard.

78. Another important aspect, mentioned in the report but not elaborated enough, that deserves further review is the contracting and management of international contractual personnel. In its comments on the Office's 1995 report on the Field Administration and Logistics Division, the Inspectors questioned the use of contractual staff in supervisory functions and recommended that action be taken by the United Nations Secretariat to prevent such a practice, which was followed by the former United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR).

Notes

1/ The JIU objectives in this area were to help: (a) build support for and use of evaluation by intergovernmental bodies and secretariats; (b) introduce or strengthen internal evaluation systems in the JIU participating organizations, appropriate to their needs but following agreed guidelines and standards; and (c) ensure that evaluation results and successful approaches were shared among the organizations. The JIU annual report submitted to the General Assembly at its forty-sixth session (A/46/34, part two, para. 2) noted a

significant expansion of internal evaluation systems and evaluation use in the United Nations system, in which JIU evaluation reports played a meaningful role. By the mid-1980s, the design and installation of internal evaluation systems in almost all organizations had been largely completed.

UNITED
NATIONS

A

General Assembly

Distr.
GENERAL

A/51/530/Corr.1
8 November 1996

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

Fifty-first session
Agenda item 141

REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL ON THE ACTIVITIES OF THE OFFICE OF INTERNAL OVERSIGHT SERVICES

Note by the Secretary-General

Corrigendum

Annex

1. Paragraph 3 should read

3. There are eight additional reports of the Office due to be presented to the General Assembly at its fifty-first session, as follows:

Review of the programme and administrative practices in the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat)

Review of the programme and administrative practices in the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)

Audit of catering services

Audit of outsourcing practices

Audit of the transition and preliquidation phase of the United Nations Peace Forces

Audit of the United Nations Postal Administration

Investigation into the United Nations access control system

Investigation into the seminars of the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples

2. Paragraph 47 should read

47. The main conclusion of the report is that "the balance sheet of what has been delivered, despite the various constraints, appears largely positive in terms of quantity of outputs and services produced" (para. 31).